DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 023 702 TE 500 213

By-Heilman, Robert B.
The Ghost on the Ramparts.
Association of Departments of English, New York, N.Y.
Pub Date Oct 68
Note-10p.; Paper presented at the ADE Seminar at the University of Chicago, June 1968.
Journal Cit-ADE Bulletin; n19 p3-12 Oct 1968
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60
Descriptors-Administrative Change, *Administrative Personnel, Administrative Problems, *Administrator Characteristics, Administrator Responsibility, *Administrator Role, *English, Faculty Recruitment, *Higher Education, Leadership Responsibility

In this keynote address to the Association of Departments of English, the speaker likens himself to "the wraith of Hamlet" and, as an "old-time" chairman, offers his advice and general impressions on the role of the English department chairman. Emphasis is given to the importance of the attitude which the chairman has toward himself, the administration, and the faculty. In his attitude toward the direction his department should take, the chairman is advised to be cautious of misguided cries for relevance and of some recent trends in the teaching of literature. About one third of the document consists of advice on how to handle various administrative procedures. (BN)

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The Ghost on the Ramparts

by Robert B. Heilman
Department of English, University of Washington

We come now to the tail end of the program. You have wined and dined, and you need a little penance to be sure you aren't here for play only. An educational week should have a somewhat mournful tone lest it seem not educational. I am your transition from Mardi Gras's fires (though it's only a fat Monday) to Wednesday's ashes, your summons from living too well back to a better life, your guide from carnival forgetting to a long lent of learning. The scheduled speaker is surefire mortification; whatever his style, he can inflict the discomforts that seem to guarantee salvation. If he jests, he will seem light-minded; if he moralizes, he will seem heavy-handed; if he lets you off the hook too soon, he will seem to shortchange you; if he is thorough, he will seem long-winded. He is the natural bridge of sighs from Monday martinis to midweek martyrdom.

The program calls this sobering homily the keynote address. After I had said I would do it--it seemed a long way away, then--I found I did not know what it is. I had only a vague image of Chicago, warmish weather, tumultuous delegates, indoor marching mobs, bands, futile gavels, a weedpatch of microphones, an orator whom no one had ever heard of but who got two minutes of cheering after every period and sometimes after the commas. This seemed too good to be true, so like the freshman in search of a theme, I tried the dictionaries. One says the keynoter "presents the essential issues of interest to the assembly." Pretty tame, that. I tried another. It says the keynote is "the line of policy. . .as set forth authoritatively in advance in a public speech." I like that. Authoritatively--that adverb so rare in the chairman's life!

Yet the authority comes only from the acquiescence of the listeners. So it is only spiritual, or, in older idiom, ghostly. This is fitting in another sense. For I am one of the old-time chairmen who would get into office and just stay on forever--not one of those newfangled types whose headships are cut off by triennial or quinquennial legal guillotines. I speak, as it were, from a former age, and I feel a bit like the wraith of Hamlet senior--perhaps a truepenny, perhaps an old mole in the cellarage, crying to you juniors, "Swear!"; an apparition who could a tale unfold, who might tempt you toward the flood or the dreadful summit of the cliff, but who might reveal the treasure uphoarded in his life, who might be privy to his country's fate and tell what foreknowing may avoid. But playing ghost runs the risk of retort from young Danes. Some kindly courtier here might urge, "Stay, illusion. . . . Speak to me." But another might complain of one who usurps this time of night; a crueler one might simply imitate the cock's crow. Then it would be small satisfaction for the ghost to stalk away, offended, or even to recall that he is, as the air, invulnerable.

Perhaps some of you are here because of a crisis in your own Denmark, in which a new Dean or President Claudius has taken over that alma mater Gertrude with whom you had such a fine filial relationship. Perhaps you suspect that he is about to send you "with speed to England" on an unexpected sabbatical. But most of you have been tapped as heir to the time that is out of joint, and drafted to be its orthopedic surgeon. Perhaps you have already fallen into the habit of soliloquy. In that case, the keynote address might aspire to be the monologue that will end soliloquies. I cannot do it, alas. However, pity me not, but lend thine serious hearing to what I shall unfold.

ED 023702 TE 500 213

ADE BULLETIN of the Association of Departments of English
Chairmen of Departments of English in American Colleges and Universities

Number 19 October 1968

Later, if we have time--before the cock crows--I may toss off a few do's and don't's of palace management. My problem is that last year John Gerber outlined administrative desiderata with great concreteness, fullness, and perceptiveness. I might argue with him, and let you doubt my brains; plagiarize him, and let you doubt my morals; or try to be different, and let you doubt my taste. Almost by chance, I settle on the third risk. I shall try a slightly more abstract theme, look a little more at the inner landscape. I shall glance at certain attitudes by which the chairman may define his role--such as his attitudes to himself, his post, his superiors, his colleagues. Here I can toss together observation, theory, indecisive meditation, cocksure obiter dicta, recollection, guesses, and tips. It is a mixed grill. Somewhere in it I hope you may find some meat.

The chairman needs first of all to have an adequate working attitude to himself as an academic man called to a chairmanship. He should never think of himself as a lost scholar or critic or teacher who, by popular demand and despite his own screams of horror, was from his alma mater's class-womb untimely ripped and set forcibly upon the throne. If he does not think of himself this way, he will not talk of himself this way, and thus he will spare auditors the embarrassment of listening to what they will rightly think of as fishy. He should never feel sorry for himself; all he has to do is get out, according to Truman's Law. Nor can he precisely say he sought and loves the chairmanship, for this runs counter to the academic superstition--academe has more superstitions than Wessex--that the only good administrators are those who, like a cave-man's girl-friend, are clubbed into the work. He is not obligated by integrity to offend the superstitions that make proudly rational men happy. But there is a middle ground between phony unwillingness and redundant eagerness--one that introduces no cliches, self-pity, soothing syrup, or false modesty: he can think that he is in the job, and say that he is, simply because the job, or some aspects of it, correspond to certain elements in himself. Privately he can live with the fact that the elements may be noble, less noble, ignoble, neutral, or a mixture; and he can let others make up their own minds which of these dominates (they will not shirk this duty). It is, I think, a respectable way of accounting for the fact that jobs and suitable occupants do tend to come together, without an unseemly forcing of the unwilling man, or an unseemly pursuit by an overwilling man.

Once he has a bearable understanding of himself in his post, the chairman needs a usable attitude to the working of the post and of his working in it. Let him avoid cliches about accepting challenges and conducting dialogues. Let him not think of himself basically as a servitor, a factotum, a leg-man, a you-name-it-I'll-get-it-done type, a yes-man for his precinct. No first-rate man, no potentially first-rate administrator will or can think of himself as one who simply translates the will of others into deeds. Privately, of course, he must be willing to accept such roles. He must do chores, execute group decisions. Hence he should not, at the other extreme, think of himself as essentially a big policy man, an idea man, an outsize mind who can leave details, routines, housekeeping, and k-p duties to others. As a matter of fact, a good deal of policy is made by the very handling of routine and detail--by the selection of committees, the working out of teaching schedules, the management of those lesser parts of the budget where there is little room for choice. The chairman's way of handling routine replies to hundreds of letters of application, or the routines of an interview gone through for the fiftieth time, may do more than the noblest generalizations to create in applicants a sense of his school and to get acceptances from them. In sum, the chairman should not act either like a little man waiting to be told what to do, or like a big man who only makes big decisions and thus tells others what to do. Let him be prepared for drudgery, and at the same time find, in the machinery amid which he inevitably lives, the devices by which gradually to move affairs in a better direction. Thus his colleagues may now and then realize, without too much pain of contentious confrontation, that they have discovered a new way of doing things.

The chairman should not think of his post as one without power, for he can quietly find ways to exercise it. There is too much sentimentality about power, as if it were inherently evil and no good man could enjoy it. It is inherently neutral, virtually all men enjoy it, and the chairman should relish using it for ends that he believes in. Sometimes he can use it to adjust inequities that result from drift, accident, indifference, or the way a committee or department vote has gone. Most regularly he can use it to move rewards in the right direction. Of the satisfactions possible to the chairman, I know none greater than that of having steered due perquisites to persons who contribute most to the well-being of the institution (they are, by the way, not always people that he loves). Obviously the relish of power has to be balanced by the knowledge that power corrupts, and perhaps his never-ending vigilance against being corrupted is one of the subtler excitements of the chairman's role. He is never sure, of course, for he can deceive himself. The natural panacea for his self-deception is the vigilance of colleagues; in this regard he can count on their moral energy (if not always their perspicacity, since the chairmanship is likely to mislead others besides its occupant). But the chairman has a still sounder way of monitoring himself in the exercise of power: he can perform every act, make every decision, as if it were going to be audited, or even scrutinized by an investigating committee. I recommend this attitude of mind. Yet in rare cases the chairman has to forget this simulated doomsday and gamble on his intuition, that is, rely on evidence not yet in being, or on quality not yet evidenced. Then he will have to brazen his way through whatever audit there is, and only hope that the ultimate sterner inspection, the audit by history, will not prove him a fool or a sentimentalist.

Next, the chairman has to live in a very uncertain area where he must manage two complementary attitudes--the one to the administration, and the other to his department faculty. Here he must boldly imagine himself to be Ulysses, watchful at once against Scylla, the monster high up on the cliff, and Charybdis, the whirlpool below. The administration will think him a disturber of their peace and insatiable agent of a malcontent faculty; the latter will think him a policeman to them and a stooge to dean and president. The administration wants him to be a fire chief, and the faculty want him to be the chief incendiary. If he antagonizes either side unbearably, the chairman cannot survive, and since part of his business is to survive, he may seem to acquire a Ulyssean duplicity. But despite pressures from above and from around, he has a rather wide range of honorable choices. For one thing, the administration won't fire him unless he is truly outrageous, for getting rid of him means finding a replacement in a day when there are more vacancies than glamorous applicants. The faculty are strongly attracted to regicide, but they tend to stop short just at the chopping block, suddenly alarmed by the horrid fact that to bear the ills they have may be a lesser evil than flying to others that they know not of. One option open to the chairman is to play administration and department against each other: to tell either side that the other won't stand for it, whether the <u>it</u> is an ill-advised ruling from above or a snatch at over-sized privilege from below. At times this <u>is</u> an appropriate tactic, but it is an inadequate model because it implies that quick footwork, sleight of hand, and poker finesse will always do. They won't. Nor can the chairman have a permanent partisan stance; by it he would be immobilized. On the other hand he can't mechanically play it now one way and now the other; this makes him too mobile, and neither side will trust him. In the end he can't avoid making one judgment after another as one pressure after another comes up; what he has to do, every time, is decide who is operating with the better sense of institutional well-being. If the administration resists a promotion that has been voted on sentimental grounds, the chairman has to be unreservedly pro-administration, for one sentimental promotion begets another, and the habit of voting feeling instead of the record is a sure route to department mediocrity. (This assumes that the chairman can spot a sentimental promotion; if he can't, he should be, not a chairman, but an

ombudsman.) If the administration wants the chairman to try to damp down a colleague who suffers from the omniscience syndrome and is therefore making stunning public pronouncements on every subject but literature, the chairman has to be pro-faculty (though he may get together with the dean and drink to laryngitis for his colleague). Obviously, living with a tasteless prophet is a lesser evil, institutionally, than letting the impression get around that there is an official code for the regulation of local prophets.

The new chairman, fresh out of the faculty, may still be in the shadow of the faculty sense of infallibility. So I should warn him not to be surprised, or to suspect himself of apostasy, if he finds the administration making a better record than he anticipated. In our day it is often the administrator who has the more thoroughgoing commitment to the institution. The institutional quality is his teacher's rating, his bibliography, his toe-hold on immortality, and he may do very well by it indeed. Granted, he may err from defective talent or defective imagination, or the very human tendency to consider his own wishes the best source of institutional health (the same sources of error, by the way, that we see in the faculty). But his commitment is conspicuous precisely because, in our day, faculty commitment is not conspicuous. The usual cliche is that the faculty's loyalty is not to the institution but to the profession. Too often, unfortunately, the loyalty is not even to the profession but simply to the professor himself, and such a loyalist tends to regard improvement in the institution as an automatic by-product of privileges for himself. If the administrator would like us to think that in his will is our peace, the offer-crowned professor is likely to think that in his bill is our piece of institutional good luck.

The chairman needs to consider his attitude to the kind of movement his department should have. He may well find that his best role is that of counterbalance or counterweight. He ought to seek a middle ground between whoring after novelty and regularly celebrating golden anniversaries of being married to the same old thing. If, in terms of its interests, methods, and emphasis, his department is on the monogamous side, he ought to parade some new fancy ladies before it and hope that some sparks will be struck. But perhaps his department already suffers from the wandering eye, drifting from one beauty queen to another, and getting successive crushes on Miss Semantics, Miss Linguistics, Miss Teacher Training, Miss ABD Degree, Miss Pass-Fail, Miss No Grades, Miss No Requirements, Miss No Composition, Miss Independent Study, and other such 36-22-36 types. He may then feel obligated to resist promiscuity. Needless to say, I do not propose to ignore or pretend to dispose of such seductive new developments, but we ought to realize that we live in an era not only of change, but dedicated to change, mad about change, and quite naive about change, so that all change seems good change, and all motion forward motion. Hence a new chairman is quite likely to think that change is his obligation, and that all innovation is salvation. In his particular department it may be, but that is to be decided in each case. In general, change is not obligatory; what is chic may be neither useful nor healthful; and all fads and fashions need a cool eye--even when they are apparently endorsed by national organizations. Several years ago some assembler of statistics discovered that many teachers of high-school English had had no course in advanced composition, and so there went up a great hue and cry about making teacher-training curricula include a course in advanced composition--three magic hours. As far as I know, the central question was unexamined and was begged--namely, the efficacy of a course in advanced composition in improving the teaching of high-school English. It is hard to examine a landslide while it is sliding, or to accuse a roaring avalanche of begging questions, but the chairman ought occasionally to risk it.

Or, to shift images, the chairman who gets his hand in the hole in the dike soon enough may prevent a flood. By the dike I mean all that protects a rational and nurturing use of the humanities against emotional torrents pretending to be the bearers of new life. Several of these are now making small holes in the dike. One

is that the study of literature is a form of psycho-therapy--a new form of an old leak that first threatened when Miss Communications was alluring pedagogical hearts ripe for an affair with a new charmer. The next is that we should be teaching the person and not the subject--a sort of secular jesuitry in which the instructor plays at directing consciousness. Another is that literary study should be a stimulation and communion of souls (the magic circle of feelings at play) rather than an informing of minds and a disciplining of imaginations. Or, in slightly different terms, the study of literature should be an experience rather than a critique of experience. hence the passion for audio-visual accompaniments, tapes, records, slides, cinemas, and all the devices of non-mind that tend to substitute a simplistic participation for the complex analytical role which involves both imaginative identification and critical detachment. Do not be surprised if some of your people want you to budget light shows to get the class into the mood of Lear or The Ancient Mariner or Wuthering Heights or The Turn of the Screw.

But of all these small currents that want to burst out and flood the land, the one that in a way speaks for all the others and is closest to wrecking the dike is the cry for relevance. It is one of the main question-begging cant words of our day; threatening because undefined, it terrifies some school-men into crying peccavi's like defendants as a Stalinist treason trial, as if they had continually, genocidally practiced willful, first-degree irrelevance. (While self-correction is seemly, a modish, uncritical self-castigation is not.) Some of the moral energy of all of us--but especially of chairmen--should go into asking what the evangelists of relevance mean, and what they want. Our documents are inevitably topical in past contexts; do the releventrepreneurs want us to make even our monuments topical, and in passing contexts? To make Chaucer speak on Vietnam? Browning on geriatrics ("the best is yet to be")? Dickens on guaranteed national income? Or shall we read only twentieth century American literature? Or concentrate on Black writers? I hope this is a parody, but I am not at all sure that it is.

Relevance can, however, be understood in a way compatible with the nature of literature in itself and as the materials of instruction. What literature is relevant to, what it must be taught as relevant to, is an inclusive human reality, the reality both of human nature and of the human situation, which persists despite the constricting and deforming tendencies which help give every age its recognizable character. In this relevance it helps maintain the age's awareness of a larger human truth than the age itself, with its defining biases and antagonisms and self-assured novelties, can ever accommodate. We live in a particular kind of narrow age--one that is strong on the hidden motive, the variants of sex, the iddish underside, malice, and destructiveness, but quite weak on other aspects of personality. Without the sense of the whole truth that literature can give (and that religion can give, except that it is misunderstood by even more people than misconceive literature) we of this age are quite likely to kill each other all off because we honestly think that that is all we can do.

What is particularly relevant to our needs, then, is the kind of sensibility we find in George Eliot, with her almost unlimited sense of human potential. Take Middlemarch. At its center we find not only a profound sense of human fallibility and lacerating egotism, but a conviction that a foolish idealism can finally set foot on solid ground without losing either a sense of the good to be pursued or the energy to pursue it; that an emotionally injured person can surmount the sense of injury and act generously; and that generous action can excite unselfish conduct in the most self-centered of beings. In these matters is the heart of relevance for an age that would have great difficulty in making such assertions; their relevance is that they might bring our partial beings a little closer to wholeness. This is not the easy nickel-in-the-slot relevance.

I go into so much detail only in the hope of making concrete the issue of the chairman's attitude to change, that is, to all the panaceas that come rolling down the pike promising to pop us into an instant brave new world. Some of them he will approve; others he may have to buy because so many colleagues, burdened with our characteristic 1960's fear of being in a rut, believe in them. But the chairman can try to be selective; he can call for a definition of terms; he can escape the illusion that to be different from what one was is surely to be better; and he can keep ever alert his eschatological sense--his awareness of the final things toward which each innovation leads. He should remember that while "make it new" may be a valid injunction for an artist, the comparable rule for the teacher is "make it true." It is a harder prescription.

Finally, the chairman must discover a manageable attitude to the human beings on his staff. He is better off if he is more curious than censorious, if he can be surprised without being outraged, and if he can be unillusioned without being disillusioned. As chairman he is more exposed than anyone else to the self-seeking side of his colleagues, to the unsteady sense of reality, to the longing for privilege, to the lingeringly immature, to the envious, the complacent, the cantankerous, the niggling, the undependable, the disruptive. They will complain about offices, office equipment, teaching schedules, parking arrangements, classroom assignments, secretarial procedures, the distance to lavatories; to gain extra services or goods (to which they are often not entitled), they will wheedle, grieve, bluff, and even be devious. Some are at odds with group decisions--say on course contents or textbooks--and I sense a new tendency to resist these on grounds of personal freedom. Here we get into that area of principles and causes in which the chairman will find some fairly complex behavior. Occasionally he will run into an honest, forthright, passionate colleague from whom he will do well to learn: the man's profound concern for an issue--say Black education or Ph.D. requirements--may stimulate the chairman to a sharper awareness than he has had. He needs stimuli of this kind. But he will also observe that when cause and principle get into the picture, motives other than love of justice are often at work. Causes always attract plotters; some men just plot spontaneously, but most lovers of plotting need facades of virtue. A cause justifies keeping things stirred up, arousing oppositions. Some people do this just for kicks. Others seek disturbances because of troubled personalities; inner discords need outer discords; these involve polemics, and polemics may give a moment's peace within. The most troubling of all troubled people are those who can endure no constraints, limits, or authority, and who therefore in the name of liberty keep pushing toward disorder. Without knowing why, they cannot endure public order, however rationally created; their own wills are to be the only determinants of action and policy. They are a more serious threat to department welfare than the well-adjusted operator, who always probes for advantages but never thinks of dressing them up in high principles. He will let summer school die on the vine rather than be the instructor you desperately need, but if it suits his interests to teach in summer school, he will expect you to stay up nights squeezing him into the payroll. For him, too, a reader is a status symbol; so he will try to inflate his enrollment to make it appear that he has a reader coming.

But you can balance against him the man who has a double-reader coming but who teaches so hard that he reads all the papers himself. There is the talented man with a conscience who will say, "If the department needs me, I will do it." There are teachers who also write instead of using classroom demands as an excuse for not writing; there are well known scholars and critics who also teach well instead of using their writing as an excuse for teaching halfheartedly or haphazardly. There are intelligent and objective men who think about department problems rationally and with a keen sense of institutional well-being. There are distinguished and less distinguished people who are not self-absorbed, who are driven neither to flattery nor contentiousness, and who can be counted on for even routine services to the department.

If I devote fewer words to these, it is not only that they are fewer in number than one could wish but that they provide no problems. The chairman needs to be reassured that they exist; they amply justify hope and faith. The others will tax his charity and take most of his time. Here, as elsewhere, the chairman should be half a hero and half a coward. As a half-hero he will work himself up to facing difficulties and crises from which he might prefer to turn his eyes. As a half-coward he will be saved from taking on all the windmills in sight. For there is much, in problems and persons, that he must simply live with; hence he should not mistake half a loaf for a derelict's diet. Unless he wants to practice therapy full time--and I strongly recommend that he never touch it--he cannot do much about the more difficult types such as the nagger, the non-stop conscientious objector, the unconscious would-be dictator. He cannot do much about those who want the chairman to be a medley of Santa Claus, denatured Mephistopheles, and defanged divinity--one who praises but never blames, who is under contract to serve but is dismissable at will, who distributes manna but hands down no tables of the law. He will have to do some enduring. But beyond that, the chairman can be an observer, a student, a learner, and, in his moment of happiest detachment, an ironic contemplator.

So much for general attitudes. Now for a few comments on combinations of attitude and action in more specific contexts. First, two obiter dicta on administrative procedures.

Nowadays there are no alternatives to conducting affairs democratically. Even benevolent Tudors are not fashionable. Keep in mind that in academe, democracy is at its best when you have an aristocracy to start with, and that you rarely do; then make the best of it. You can sometimes appeal to an undifferentiated democracy to transcend itself. This works better with smaller numbers of democrats. The larger the department, the more desirable that authority be delegated to an executive committee. The larger the number of people making decisions, the greater the influence of demagogues and of irrational men, especially the feelie-types who take every random emotion for a moral imperative binding on everybody else. The larger the assembly, the less of true candor, the less discussion of substantive issues underlying specific proposals; the greater the opportunity for polarization and schismatic sentiment (which of course some types want).

The second rule for conducting affairs is this: by all means get an administrative assistant--a professional rather than a faculty amateur. By a professional I mean a woman (oh well, it can be a man if you insist) who probably starts out as a secretary but who has an executive sense that makes her invaluable. Somehow she remembers everything-rules, history, half-forgotten intentions, half-recorded actions. You will serve yourself best by giving her your confidence: keep her in touch with all that goes on, trust her imagination and good sense. The chances are that she will manage all kinds of things better than you would, that she will watch herself to avoid pushing people around, and that by taking responsibilities she will push you into the classroom and library where you should spend some time.

Decide whether you are a program man or a personnel man. For me, appointments are the most interesting of all tasks, and I like to think that all else follows from them. Some very good men give primacy to programs, and think personnel secondary. Find in which way you act most spontaneously, and proceed accordingly.

Whether he makes policy by making appointments, or makes appointments to execute policy, the chairman must face certain facts of life. First, his appointive freedom is restricted by the type of institution he represents, by its tone and resources, and even its geography (for instance, I can't appoint people who want to be in private schools or small colleges or east of the Mississippi). Second, distinguishing among candidates is not easy. Recommendations are mostly written in a special dialect--

double-speak, or marketplace Esperanto, or a kind of Braille--and it takes quite a bit of experience to translate it. I strongly advise reading folders aloud in committees, sometimes dozens of them on end; then meanings begin to appear. It takes time. And if you cannot trust recommenders whom you do not know personally, alas you often cannot trust those you do know. They take more pride in moving the goods than in pleasing the customer; they can always look terribly surprised later if you tell them that they sent you a boor or a bore, a slob or a sectary, or some kind of evangelist with a heart of gold and a brain of angelfood. A few, thank God, will level with you. As for the others, there are no rules. Caveat emptor, unceasingly.

If you are hiring a man who has a job somewhere else, beware of one who tells you how unsympathetically they have treated him. Three to one, being mistreated is his way of life, and you will be his next villain.

Get set for the yo-yo colleague who wants to do an annual bounce from your department to another because only perpetual motion makes him feel significant. You can't really explain to him that inwardly he fears his image would wither under continuous scrutiny by the same people. Resolve to live without him, or, if he is useful when visible, you may want to settle for half an oaf.

These days we hear much of planning. It can be overdone. There are real virtues in laissez faire and laissez vivre. The plan I value is less the rigid public blueprint than your best men's imprecise private images of a desirable state of things toward which, at whatever pace and by whatever means become possible, the department will keep moving.

Regard every decision as a precedent. What does it imply for other situations, and can you live with it? This is particularly desirable when you face regional imperialism in the department. Some sectors almost instinctively become pressure groups for infinite expansion, and under the banner of "excellence," "distinction," etc., push for ever more personnel, courses, budget.

Whenever you can, get writers to teach literature. They have an inside grasp of it as art that is needed to counterbalance the literary history, cultural history, and history of ideas that now have great play in English departments. Whenever possible, let staff members teach outside their own fields; they will profit from knowing more, and visits abroad may help reduce field parochialism. Keep your own hand in teaching; the classroom may seem a haven from the department office, and sooner or later you will return to it anyway.

Finally, we have been told that we are in the midst of a revolution--the paradoxical one that accompanies, not bare subsistence, but tweedy affluence. The well-paid professor appears to be no happier than the underpaid one. If his stirrings are a revolution, we can see its components--fraternitarianism, egalitarianism, and libertarianism. By fraternitarianism I mean collective bargaining, as yet so limited that we cannot tell how it will affect academic patterns and hence the role of the chairman. It implies egalitarianism, which may be a cry for justice, or a confusing of equity and equality, or, still more distressingly, an unconscious strategy by which the legitimate claims of equality are to be stretched into a thwarting of the claims of quality. Such an egalitarianism, carried to a logical conclusion, would ease the chairman out of his most difficult, his most significant, and his most satisfying function. It is libertarianism of which we have seen most--that perhaps final luxury of an affluent world which lies not in freedom from unjust restraints but in the belief that any restraint is unjust. The ultimate libertarian says to all, "Thou shalt not say 'Thou shalt not' to me"; any brake on my own will is tyranny. This view, of course, would eliminate chairmen except as they would be content to be lackeys. On quite other grounds it is ominous doctrine, not only because it maintains a false view of reality but because if it spread from

its present minority role it would beget a counter falsity: it would lead to chaos, and the community would then sanction, in place of the chairman, an officer who would say, to all, "Thou shalt not," and "Thou shalt," and be obeyed.

But though I list difficulties, I want to underline my belief that the administrative life has much to recommend it. To describe its fundamental satisfactions I revert to my earlier terms: one rarely gets into this work unless it corresponds to some element of his own being, however defined, and it is satisfying to have that element exercised. Again, there is the satisfaction of using power, however limited, to good ends. Furthermore, we should never underestimate the value of simply keeping things moving in an orderly fashion, and the satisfaction of coping with the difficulties that this entails. When upper administrators such as deans and provosts complain of department chairmen, their grief is less over uninventiveness than over disorderliness, less over our failing to make big new ten-strikes than over our having things at sixes and sevens. If affairs have not gone backward during one's administration, one has some cause for pleasure. If he is lucky, they may even go forward. Though I have less faith in change--in either the possibility or the necessary beneficence of it--than do many reputable men, I in no sense rule it out as a source of pleasure to the administrator who accomplishes it. If he can innovate magnificently, let him glory in that; if he can here and there, ever so modestly, give a gentle upward nudge to the quality of things, let him glory equally in that. But perhaps the subtlest satisfaction is less in what he measurably does than in what he perceptibly is. He may be an image for that department; he is bound to be an image of it. It will tend in some degree to become what he is, and, knowing this, he may grow in the part, and present something of largeness of mind, some grace of demeanor and feeling. Conversely, he will image what the department is, and, knowing this, he may intuit, amid all the obscuring accidents of its daily life, its latent gifts of spirit, and in turn so reflect them as to reveal the department in its noblest light.

Finally, I want to quote C.M. Bowra's 1967 autobiographic volume, Memories 1898-1939. Bowra, one of the great teachers of classics and, as such, a master of true relevance in the humanities, was considering the academic profession. He writes, ". . . I gave thought to it and decided that a scholastic life must inevitably involve administration and would be all the better for it." In what sense, "all the better for it"? In two ways, potentially. The first is that the administrator may increase in knowledge. People, as we have noted, unconsciously reveal themselves to him--in more fundamental ways than they do to their colleagues; he sees more undisguised springs of action. (Academe is a prism that breaks original sin down into a spectrum of egotisms, from purple passion to green envy to red rabble-rousing. One sees virtue too, but somehow the vices are more educational.) He has more understanding of the human scene than he would have without the administrative vantage-point; if he writes, he is likely to write more knowingly, perhaps even more wisely. "The better for it" secondly, perhaps, because as administrator the academic man has undertaken more, has elected to work harder, and may develop more than he otherwise would have done. He risks more moral pitfalls--those of self-pity, complacency, arrogance, blindness, and even injustice. But the conditions of his life should make him doubly aware of these, and he may undergo more of the discipline which gives form to a life. He may manage a little more of endurance, of the temperate acceptance of reality, of self-containment, of the adjustment to tasks, of an unsentimental charity. It is at least a possibility.

My hour is almost come. I feel like a guilty thing, too long unheeding the fearful summons. You may well wish me back in the tormenting flames. But I hope that the old ghost's plaints do not make the night hideous or freeze your young blood; that he does not seem one who has had poison put in his ear and has hence become too grouchy or jaundiced a witness. Above all, I pray that this visitation is not to blunt thy almost whetted purpose. I point to no overwhelming tasks. Since the chairman, like the dean of men, no longer acts in loco parentis, you need not mete out penalties for incestuous sheets, reject the adulterate beast, berate the couch of luxury, or censure those who prey on garbage. You may leave them to heaven.

I summon you not to revenge, which usually means murder; not to fencing matches with doctored weapons; you need not detect spies who have bugged the arras, direct plays, guard against being shanghaied, pretend to be psychotic, or defend decorum in the cemetery. Instead you need only resolve to let Gertrude work things out in her own way, find out how to get along with Claudius, how to listen to Polonius, how to redirect the energies of Laertes, how to exercise restraint and avoid irony with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, how to talk understandingly to Ophelia, and how to bring in Fortinbras as your administrative assistant. Think me then an honest ghost, more descriptive than prescriptive, intent on reporting all that goes on in academic Elsinor, but generally hopeful, envisaging, on the other side of difficulty, at least an iota of attainment and a sliver of contentment--no less than mortal due. I do believe it works out that way.

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